Title: Need to solve acute drinking water problem in Western Rajasthan.

COL. (RETD.) SONA RAM CHOUDHARY (BARMER): Out of 32 districts of Rajasthan, 26 districts have been in the grip of drought and famine. Western Rajasthan is the worst hit area which is reeling under severe drought for the third consecutive year, especially, Barmer, Jaisalmer, Jalore, Pali and Jodhpur districts. There is acute shortage of water and fodder in this area and employment opportunities are non-existent. Under famine relief programme, the State Government has given employment to some local people, which is not sufficient for the poor people of this most backward desert area. A large number of youths migrate to adjoining States in search of their livelihood. A large number of cattle have perished for want of fodder this year.

The border districts like Barmer and Jaisalmer have not received adequate attention for development. Though Indira Gandhi Nahar Project commenced during early fifties, this project is not yet complete. Funds are generally allotted for this National Project every year but this year the Centre have not allotted any amount.

Conventional water sources including underground water reserves are shrinking. I, therefore, request that:-

a. the Government of India which have been funding this Indira Gandhi Nahar Project to the tune of Rs.60/- crore to Rs.100/- crore every year, should allot, at least, Rs.50-60 crore this year for this Project so that the work would not come to a grinding halt; and

b. the Central Ground Water Board and the Ministry of Water Resources should help Rajasthan Government in formulating Water Schemes from perennial sources, *i.e.,* Indira Gandhi Nahar Project and Narbada Dam for Thar desert districts of Barmer and Jaisalmer.